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Vol XXXI, No 9, Sep 1953
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Vol XXXIX, No 4, Jul-Aug 1953
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Vol LIII, No 9, Sep 1953
- IV. ZHURNAL NEVROPATOLOGII I PSIKHIATRII im. S S Korsakova
Vol LIII, No 10, Oct 1953

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I. KLINICHESKAYA MEDITSINA

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1. Of particular interest to me in this issue was the section found on pages 78 through 80 called "discussion". In previous reports [redacted] the name of O B Lepeshinskaya. It will be recalled that this woman made an astonishingly rapid ascent in Soviet medical circles during and after World War II and has been considered the most prominent dialectical materialist in the field of biology in the USSR. She proposed an original theory on cellular development which has been regarded as sort of gospel in Communist materialistic biology and anyone who attempted to oppose her views was criticized severely. [redacted] feel competent to comment on the merit of her biological studies but perhaps her observations contain some truth and perhaps not. [redacted] however, that in all her publications and also in all publications written by others about her the fact is emphasized that Stalin, "the greatest scientist of all times" encouraged her in her work and paid close attention to her scientific activities. This of course effectively closed the mouths of all her potential critics in the USSR. Early in 1953 she published a peculiar article entitled "New Method of Rejuvenation". In it she favored treatment with sodium bicarbonate baths, a procedure which, of course, is well known. She states, however, that this treatment could prevent the development of old age or at least decrease the features associated with senility. This article caused something of a sensation and was mentioned on the pages of newspapers both inside and outside the USSR including the US. Of course her statements would seem to be stupid or at least unjustified but [redacted] not be being fair to the author since [redacted] read the article itself. [redacted] interested to find in the discussion section of this issue of KLINICHESKAYA MEDITSINA critical remarks about the article. One critic, E A Livshits (Petrozavodsk), states that her points of view are "anti-materialistic and anti-Pavlov." He further states that her theories on old age are in agreement with reactionary US theories. Another reviewer, Dr A Ya Mogilevskiy (Kiev), also criticizes her article and states that she shows "illiteracy in the elementary postulates of biology and biochemistry." He further states that her experiments are completely inconclusive and the interpretation contains many stupidities and much nonsense. He concludes: "It would be better if leading medical journals did not publish such articles which can only cause perplexity in wide circles of medical people." In this can be seen one specific result of the death of Stalin. Since Lepeshinskaya's principal supporter is no longer on the scene she has become vulnerable to criticism from all quarters, and it is a virtual certainty that in the future she will either be persecuted or at least forgotten. This is a beautiful illustration of one of the patterns encountered in Soviet science.

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2. On page five is a review entitled "Critiques of Psychosomatic medicine" by V P Lekishvili (Leningrad). I do not know this man but he apparently is a very active Communist. In this article he criticizes the US journal PSYCHOSOMATIC MEDICINE as well as some recent US monographs concerned with this subject. He first criticizes US authors in the field for having different points of view on the same subject and he regards this lack of unanimity as evidence of decay of bourgeois medicine. He also criticizes US authors for paying too much attention to the "reactionary doctrines of Freud" especially in books dealing with the so-called "symbolic language of the organs." He states: "US psycho-therapy helps the imperialist to re-educate people, transforming human beings into beasts and this is the scientific explanation of US gangsterism." He uses such picturesque terms as "reactionary philosophy" "terminologic juggling" and "agnostic delirium". He criticizes the theory of internal conflicts and claims that US scientists over-exaggerate hereditary factors. He states that the great scientist Alvarez talks like any "pious pastor" and that his explanation of the role of psychosomatic factors in pathology is not based on any

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reliable facts. [] have not read all of the publications criticized by Lekishvili but [] familiar with Alvarez's work. Incidentally, his scientific activity as well as that of Ivy and Carlson was well known in my country in the 1920's and we actually corresponded with them. My teacher Yanovskiy regarded them extremely highly. Lekishvili goes on to ask why US specialists in psychosomatic medicine explain disease by the development of internal conflicts or hereditary factors. He answers his own question by quoting a statement of Alvarez to the effect that he is afraid of the large amount of mental disease observed in the US as well as the great morbidity in the US in general. These conditions, according to Lekishvili, represent great dangers for the capitalistic regime. At the end of his article Lekishvili criticizes two Soviet psychosomaticists, namely the prominent clinicians V A Gilyarovskiy and M I Astvatsaturov, and also criticizes the scientific activities of Orbeli. Astvatsaturov has published many valuable articles and is a very prominent and gifted neuropathologist. The textbook he published on nervous diseases is, I believe, one of the best in the world. [] before World War II being deeply impressed with his theory on the role of the thalamus in physiology and pathology. In Lekishvili's article, however, this theory is declared reactionary because it has nothing in common with the Soviet interpretation of Pavlov's work.

3. On page three is an article entitled "For the Close Relationship Between Science and Practice" by Prof Yu V Fol'bort (Kiev). [] Fol'bort personally and he is a true scientist. He was one of the pupils of Pavlov and has been the author of many interesting articles. Because of his German name and origin he was never considered very reliable by the Communist authorities but it has always been my definite impression that he was anti-Communist anyway. He is now about 65. Apparently this short article was written for reasons of self-preservation although its somewhat 'Sovietic' tone is not objectionably so.
4. Fol'bort's department of normal physiology at the Kiev Medical Faculty apparently has charge of a county hospital in Makarov, a large village near Kiev. The staff at this hospital has started a so-called "preservation curative regime" for their patients. On pages 71-74 the effects of this regime are discussed by staff members of this hospital. In spite of all the build-up all this regime turns out to be is more sleep for the patients. For example, they recommend that patients sleep for 10 or 11 hours instead of seven or eight. They believe that the healing of surgical wounds is accelerated by more sleep and that with it a patient's post-operative period may be passed through without any complications. They claim that under this regime patients stay in the hospital only 1.3 bed days instead of three bed days prior to the operation and 11.3 instead of 13 bed days after the operation. They state that the mortality rate showed a decrease but no specific figures were given. Also in the article they report the complete break down of the day of one of their patients under this regime. According to the article the operation performed on this patient was intestinal resection. On the fifth post-operative day this patient slept for 12 hours and 15 minutes. The balance of the day was used as follows: feeding: three hours; gymnastics: 16 minutes; morning and evening toilet: 31 minutes; temperature taking: 29 minutes; physician's rounds: 36 minutes; conversation with physician on the course of the treatment: 17 minutes; therapeutic measures: 23 minutes; enema: 16 minutes; penicillin injection: four minutes; preparation of vitamin drink: one hour (the patient had to prepare this herself); knitting: two hours, 10 minutes; political period: 30 minutes; music: 22 minutes; letter: 28 minutes; conversation with other patients: two hours. This is obviously a lot of nonsense and [] believe that the patient never followed this schedule. The breakdown is interesting, however, from the point of view that it apparently describes an ideal hospital day from the point of view of the Soviets.

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5. This issue contains two apolitical and quite valuable surveys. The first of these by Prof E I Tarakanov (Moscow) is on the therapeutic value of bromides. In summary, he recommends very small doses of bromides, one to three grains twice daily. He believes that minimal doses are helpful and large doses can be harmful especially in aged. The other survey is by M R Mogendovich and N G Sosnyakov (both from Moletov). It is a discussion of so-called inter-receptors of the lungs.
6. On page 30 is an article by the well-known old professor B B Koyranskiy which evaluates the role of training in the hardening of the body against cold. This is merely a routine article on the subject.
7. On page 36 Prof B B Kogan has an article which deals with his observations on psychic influences on the course of allergic reactions. The article itself contains nothing particularly suggestive, but it will be recalled that Kogan was one of the Kremlin physicians who in 1953 was arrested and then later freed. The publishing of one of his articles in this magazine means that he has now been rehabilitated politically.

II. FIZIOLOGICHESKIY ZHURNAL SSSR

8. This particular issue contains a lot of small articles concerned with special topics in the field of neuro-physiology which may be of some interest to specialists in this field. Among the topics covered are an analysis of hypnotic sleep, innervation of the intestines, and the relationship between the urinary bladder and gastric secretion.
9. There is also an article on the functioning of the stomach and intestines in infants. Peculiarly enough there are also special articles devoted to the digestive processes of deer and sheep.
10. The historical review section describes the work of the great protein chemist Danilevskiy. The article is extremely complimentary although Danilevskiy was bitterly anti-Communist. He died in 1923.
11. Orbeli receives more criticism in this issue but this time indirectly. On pages 498-508 his "favorite son" L T Zagorul'ko criticizes himself. He writes: "we pupils and associates of Orbeli participated in the opinions of our teacher in the past and in our experimental activity tried to develop them. Now, after critical examination of them in the light of Marxism, Leninism etc. etc. we realize how erroneous were our decisions."

III. ZHURNAL NEVROPATOLOGII I PSIKHIATRII, No 9

12. On the first page of this issue is a picture of the great scientist G I Rossolimo and the issue contains three articles about him and the great value of his work. Rossolimo was severely persecuted by the Bolsheviki and in protest against the Soviet regime refused to do any scientific work after the 1918 revolution. Nevertheless one of the articles states that the Soviet regime made his scientific development possible.
13. There are a number of interesting articles concerned with theoretical questions in the field of neuropathology. One of the few clinical contributions is concerned with venous cerebral accidents. There is another by A D Dimaburg concerned with facial reflexes in cases of brain tumor. who is now about 55. He is an excellent physician and is anti-Communist. This issue also has an article on electroencephalography and this diagnostic method is apparently very popular with the Soviets. Judging from the tracings illustrating the article, they appear to be doing well in this field and I believe they are continually trying to discover new ways of using the method and modifications of it.

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IV. ZHURNAL NEVROPATOLOGII I PSIKHIATRII, No 10

14. This issue is concerned chiefly with various topics in the field of schizophrenia. The first article for instance by V V Znamenskiy is concerned with the treatment of this condition with sulphur and the development of various somatic and neurologic reactions after this treatment. The therapeutic effects of this treatment are not discussed at all. Another article is concerned with microscopic changes in the brain in severe cases of this disease. The third article, by the well-known clinician M Ya Sereyskiy, and others discusses the effects of therapeutic sleep in schizophrenia. Small doses of sodium amytol were used to induce this sleep. The authors reported a certain amount of improvement in the patients treated but concluded their article with the statement that their findings were not sufficient for any general statements.
15. This issue also contains three or four articles concerned with the content of various vitamins in the blood or urine of different kinds of mental patients.

GENERAL

16. It was my impression after reviewing the neurosurgical and clinical journals that open Soviet medical literature can contain only articles on very specialized theoretical subjects. [redacted] that it is probably forbidden to publish articles about really new or significant advances. One will encounter, for example, references to new drugs, etc, but articles about the drugs themselves are rare. The contents of all journals appear to be subject to very strict control and anything which could possibly be regarded as secret does not appear. This control appears to have been particularly strict since the death of Stalin.

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